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CHFS Focus Employee Spotlight: OIG Drug Enforcement Investigators

Fighting the illegal prescription drug battle

The job on any given day might consist of running down leads for a case, appearing in court, meeting with a prosecutor or drug task force, executing a search warrant, assisting on a police raid, intercepting mail deliveries of illegal prescription drugs or dumpster diving for evidence in Florida. Sound exciting? Well, according to the six drug enforcement investigators with the CHFS Office of Inspector General whose work involves those very activities and more, it is.

Investigators Dave Sallengs, R.Ph; Bob Kelley, R.Ph; Mike Burton, R.Ph; Duncan McCracken, R.Ph; Paula York, R.Ph; and Chris Johnson, Pharm.D, are part of the Drug Enforcement and Professional Practices Branch (DEPPB) in the OIG's Division of Fraud, Waste and Abuse/Identification and Prevention. DEPPB also houses the Kentucky All Schedule Prescription Electronic Reporting (KASPER) program. The job requires the investigators to be registered pharmacists and be vested with police powers.

This group works together to "administer the Kentucky Controlled Substances act as well as parts of the Food Drug and Cosmetics act," Sallengs said. "We are also responsible for licensing manufacturers and distributors shipping controlled substances into Kentucky. We fight the diversion of legally controlled substances every day."

Administrative regulations mandate that investigators must be registered pharmacists with experience working in a retail setting. Kentucky statutes provide the investigators with sworn authority to enforce laws pertaining to drugs in Kentucky. All six investigators, coincidentally, are graduates of the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy and they all love what they do.

Sallengs, the branch manager, has more than 36 years of experience working with pharmaceutical drugs. Prior to joining the state in 1999, he worked in various pharmacy-related fields. "The most rewarding thing about my job is the opportunity to manage such a professional group of people," he said. "In my experience, a person should consider him or herself lucky if he or she looks forward to coming to work every day, and I do."

Kelley is the investigations supervisor and also has 36 years of experience in this area. He became an investigator in 1985 and says he enjoys his job "because of the challenge it presents. Each day is a new adventure and allows me to apply my knowledge and experience. I enjoy working with other law enforcement agencies and meeting new people." Kelly said it gives him a feeling of satisfaction to divert legal controlled substances from being sold and used illegally.

"I feel I am doing a great public service," he said.

Burton became an investigator in 1989 and says what he's most enjoyed on the job over the years are the daily challenges and variety of working different investigations. "I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with the different local, state and federal agencies on complex cases and issues involving controlled prescription drug issues," he said. "Most certainly I have enjoyed meeting hundreds of unique individuals throughout the years."

McCracken became an investigator in 1997. "The most rewarding thing about my job is the knowledge that I am protecting my family and the families of the commonwealth from illegal use and abuse of prescription controlled substances," he said.

York joined the branch as an investigator in 1999. "In my capacity as a pharmacist investigator, I am able to use my pharmacy background in a unique way to help combat the misuse of prescription drugs," she said. "So many people across Kentucky are impacted in some way by the illegal use of prescriptions drugs and it is very gratifying to know that our office is helping in the fight against prescription drug abuse."

Johnson became an investigator in 1999. He said he enjoys working with his fellow investigators and other law enforcement agencies. "It takes teamwork to combat the ongoing drug problem in our state," he said. "There is a certain camaraderie when individuals come together to achieve the same goal." Johnson considers it an honor to work with various professional licensure boards that play a key role in combating drug abuse by disciplining rogue professionals who work outside the law and pose a danger to themselves and the public.

This small group of investigators keeps busy fighting the illegal prescription drug battle. In June 2004, they were



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working 209 cases and since that time they have opened 340 new cases and closed 305 cases. Of the closed cases, eight resulted in criminal prosecution; 34 were referred to the Professional Licensure Board for action; seven were sent to Medicaid for further action; 66 were referred to the Attorney General's office for prosecution; 19 went to Commonwealth's Attorneys offices; two went to the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency; and 136 were sent to state or local police agencies or drug task forces. Thirty-three cases were closed without the need for further action.

"This is a group of incredibly well-qualified, conscientious, dedicated and courageous individuals who work hard every day to combat the rising problem of illegal prescription drugs, said Inspector General Robert J. Benvenuti, III. "I am very proud to have them as a part of the OIG and Kentuckians are fortunate to have them as public servants."

CHFS Focus Program Spotlight: Division of Child Support honors outstanding contracting officials



By Anya Armes Weber

Above, from left, Oldham County Attorney John Fendley, Oldham child support worker Teresa Vandenbark and former Department for Community Based Services Commissioner Mike Robinson at the Division of Child Support's 2005 contracting official award ceremony. Fendley took top honors at the event for the third consecutive year. Photo by Robert Martin

The CHFS Division of Child Support recently presented awards to the state's top child support enforcement contracting officials and also honored those who have made significant improvement in their child support enforcement success since last.

Four areas of child support enforcement activities make up the benchmarks by which contractor achievements are measured: paternity establishments, child support order establishment, current support collections and arrearage collections.

The division, in the Community Based Services department of Children and Family Services, contracts with county attorneys or special prosecutors to administer its work in all 120 counties.

For the third straight year, Oldham County Attorney John Fendley took top honors. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, Fendley's achieved a paternity establishment ratio of 95.58 percent.

Fendley said location is a prime reason for his county's repeat performance excellence.

"Being in a growing county like Oldham gives us an advantage," he said. "We also have a wonderful group – led by child support coordinator Vicki Turner - who actually does the work. They know what they're there to do and they get it done."

Fendley also cited cooperation from the county's court system, circuit clerk's office and sheriff's office. "Everybody is willing to bend over backward to facilitate what we are doing," he said.

A newcomer to the top performers' list this year was Jeffrey Dean, Pendleton County attorney for 16 years. Pendleton finished 12th in the rankings.

"We have been close so many times," Dean said. "We sort of hovered up there around it but this was the first year we finally made it to the top tier."

Dean said for his staff, the honor is gratifying. "They worked hard," he said. "In this day and age of budget cuts, for them to be recognized is an honor. I know they were thrilled."

Dean said being in a small county – Pendleton has a little more than 15,000 people – makes it even more important for staff to be responsive to customers. "Sometimes that is really difficult because your clients know where you shop, where you eat. You hear all the people's complaints," he said. "You are always making somebody mad. Still, it's a good feeling to serve the people who elected you and put their trust in you."

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Webster County Attorney Clint Prow received the "Most Improved Statewide" award for better numbers in all categories.

Overall, Webster improved 77 spots, from 110 at the end of fiscal year 2004 to 33 in 2005.

Prow gave all credit to his staff and noted several changes in his county's child support office in the past year.

"Last year we hired a new director of child support, Peggy Hedges," he said. "She came to us from neighboring Union County, whose office has been very supportive."

An office reorganization, redistribution of work duties and assistance from the state also improved productivity, he said.

"The Division of Child Support has been a big help," Prow said. "When we were down at 110 (in the rankings), they came down and helped us a lot. We also have a great family court judge who doesn't mind the extra large dockets we give him sometimes."

Last year, the Cabinet was awarded nearly \$8 million in federal incentives for its child support program.

In November 2004, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support Enforcement awarded the Division of Child Support \$7.9 million for outstanding performance. Awards were based on performance measures including paternity establishment, current collections as compared to current support obligations and past-due collections.

Division of Child Support Director Monte Gross said the federal awards were a reflection of the contractors' dedication.

"Helping our families who depend on child support payments takes a great deal of determination from these contracting officials," he said. "The improved numbers of so many of these counties indicates that more and more parents are better able to provide for their children."

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month

Contact: Deborah Basemore, Health Program Administrator – (502) 595-4459, ext. 300

Sickle Cell Syndrome affects one in 400 African-Americans in the United States. It is more common in individual of African ancestry, but affects other ancestry groups such as Arabs, Greeks, Turks, Italians (chiefly

Sicilians), Iranians, Filipinos, Asiatic-Indians and Hispanics. One in 12 African-Americans and one in 1,400 Hispanics are carriers.

Sickle Cell Syndrome is an inherited disorder that causes red blood cells to change from a normal disc shape to a crescent or "sickle" shape when oxygen is released to vital organs. When the cells regain oxygen, they resume their normal shape. The process of losing and gaining oxygen is known as a sickle cell episode.

Inadequate oxygen to the organs can cause problems including pain, stroke, blindness, impaired hearing and heart and kidney disorders. Normal red blood cells live for 120 days, but sickle cells live only 20 days and deliver less oxygen per cell than healthy cells, all of which can lead to anemia and other health complications, sometimes even death.

September is National Sickle Cell Syndromes Awareness Month. The Sickle Cell Association of Kentuckiana (SCAK) collaborates with other stakeholders to provide education and treatment resources to the public. Some of the organizations involved in this effort include: University of Louisville medical students, health departments, health care agencies, churches and the Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs.

The Louisville community is working to educate and identify the needs of individuals and families affected by Sickle Cell Syndromes. Several activities are planned in the Louisville area to promote education and awareness of this debilitating disease. The following is a list of activities and locations (all events are in Louisville):

Wednesday, Sept. 14 - Health Fair

First Gethsemane Baptist Church
1159 Algonquin Parkway

Sunday, Sept. 18 - Sickle Cell Syndromes in the Park

Middletown Park, 201 Park Place Drive
*Activities includes putt-putt golf, go carts, laser tag, food and games

Tuesday, Sept. 20 - Take a Loved One to the Doctor

Health Fair
Kroger, 2710 West Broadway

Monday, Sept. 26 - Wendy's Family Day

3301 Cane Run Road



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Important News on Expanded Newborn Screening

Senate Bill 24, passed during the 2005 General Assembly regular session, expands the number of conditions for which newborns are screened in Kentucky. Roll-out of the complete program of 29 screening tests is expected by Dec. 31.

Disorders are being added to state lab screening capabilities as laboratory equipment is acquired and testing validation is completed. Updates on the expansion process will be distributed on a regular basis and will also be available on the newborn screening Web site at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/ach/newbornscreening.htm> under "Current News."

Natural gas prices could be highest ever this winter

PSC urges consumers to conserve energy, switch to budget billing plans

From the Kentucky Public Service Commission

Kentucky consumers should be prepared for the highest natural gas prices ever this winter, according to the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC).



"A combination of factors is pushing prices to unprecedented levels," PSC Chairman Mark David Goss said. "Natural gas is likely to cost more than it did during the winter of 2000-2001, when prices set a record."

Consumers should prepare now for the coming heating season.

"Get ready for winter by weatherizing your home," Goss said. "If you haven't already done so, contact your utility about budget billing plans that give you a predictable heating bill every month, so you won't get hit with unexpectedly high bills in the winter."

Natural gas prices have been rising in recent years, but the increase has steepened recently. Prices rose this summer, rather than declining as is typical during warmer months. Prices are currently twice what they were a year ago.

Several factors are combining to push gas prices higher:

1. The rising price of crude oil.
2. Higher demand for gas to generate electricity for increased air conditioning use during a hot summer has driven up prices.
3. About half the natural gas used for winter heating is put into storage in the summer. In the past, this gas was less expensive and helped offset higher gas prices in the winter. This year, reserves are costing more than ever.
4. Demand for natural gas in North America continues to increase, and new production has been unable to keep pace. The ability to import gas from overseas is limited.

"The supply disruptions caused by Hurricane Katrina simply made a bad situation even worse," Goss said. "Most of the gas used in this part of the country comes from the Gulf Coast, so we will still be feeling the effects of Hurricane Katrina this winter."

The ultimate impact on consumers will depend on the weather during the coming heating season, he said. A warm winter that keeps demand in check would help keep prices in check, but cold weather that increases demand could drive prices even higher, Goss said.

"That is why it is so important that consumers do whatever they can to reduce the amount of natural gas they use," Goss said.

By federal law, natural gas prices are not regulated at the wholesale level, and fluctuate with supply and demand. Under Kentucky statute, gas companies are entitled to recover the wholesale cost of the gas they deliver to customers. The companies' gas cost adjustments are reviewed by the PSC to make sure they accurately reflect the wholesale cost of gas.

Gas companies use storage and other tools to reduce volatility in the natural gas prices passed on to consumers. Other tools include the use of long-term purchase agreements that provide gas at predictable prices.

The five major natural gas distribution companies in Kentucky are Atmos Energy, Columbia Gas of Kentucky Inc., Delta Natural Gas Co. Inc., Louisville Gas and Electric Co. and The Union Light, Heat, and Power Co. Together, the five companies serve over 750,000 customers in Kentucky and deliver 176 billion cubic feet of gas annually.

The PSC is an agency of the Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet. It regulates more than 1,500 gas, water, sewer, electric and telecommunication utilities

operating in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and has approximately 110 employees.

Coping with high natural gas prices

Information for consumers

Kentucky consumers can take a number of steps to reduce their natural gas use or to ease the impact of higher gas costs:

Budget billing: Annual costs are spread out over 12 months so costs during high-use months aren't as high as they would be otherwise. Contact your local utility for more information.

Energy conservation measures: Turn down heating thermostats (most people are comfortable at 68 degrees) and water heaters (120 degrees is hot enough for nearly all uses) to save energy.

Energy audits: Ask your local utility if it offers free or low-cost home energy audits to identify energy-wasting trouble spots and provide information on how to correct the problems.

Weatherization: Reduce the inflow of cold air and warm air leakage around windows and doors. Some basic weatherization steps include:

1. Use caulk or weather-stripping to seal cracks around windows, doors, pipes and other points where cold air enters the home. This alone can reduce heating costs by 10 percent or more.
2. Add insulation in attics, crawl spaces and walls.
3. Cover windows, especially those with single-pane glass, with storm windows or plastic sheeting before cold weather.
4. Clean or replace furnace filters monthly to improve airflow and efficiency.

Advice on conserving energy, including links to a wide range of information, also is available from the Kentucky Division of Energy, on the Web at:
<http://www.energy.ky.gov/dre3/>.

Weatherization assistance for low-income families is available in Kentucky. Many utilities offer weatherization assistance in conjunction with local social service agencies. Local social service agencies also offer

assistance through a state program administered by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. For information on weatherization assistance, call 502-564-7536, ext. 4235, or go to:

<http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dfs/Weatherization.htm>.

For general information about cutting heating costs, utility issues or for assistance with resolving consumer disputes with utilities, contact the PSC by calling 800-772-4636 or go to the PSC Web site at: <http://psc.ky.gov>.

Family Support staff raises hundreds of dollars for KECC; Funds earmarked for hurricane aid

By Anya Armes Weber



Above, from left, Division of Family Support employees Katie Brown, Lee Ann May, Deliliah Loman, Crystal DeSpain and Marchetta Carmicle staff the Division of Family Support's fund-raising table earlier this month. Loman showed off some of the money the division raised.

Staff from the central office of the Division of Family Support in Frankfort raised more than \$600 for the Kentucky Employees Charitable Campaign in a one-day event earlier this month. They sold baked goods, books and videos and raffled off theme gift baskets.

"We want to designate the money for the American Red Cross so it can help the victims of Hurricane Katrina," DFS staffer Deliliah Loman said. "We thank everyone who donated items and money to our fund-raiser to help those who really need it."

Gift basket winners are:

- Miscellaneous basket: Leslye Robertson, Division of Policy Development
- University of Kentucky basket: Jean Herrell, Division of Procurement Services
- "Frou-frou" basket: Judy Hill, Education Cabinet, Office of Education and Training

Loman said the division will plan another fund-raiser before the KECC campaign ends this fall.

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KECC charity profile: WHAS Crusade for Children

Since 1954, Louisville's WHAS Crusade for Children has raised more than \$108 million for schools, agencies and hospitals that help special needs children since 1954. One hundred percent of all donations is distributed to organizations that serve special needs children in all 120 Kentucky counties and 50 southern Indiana counties.



The Crusade itself is a weekend-long telethon beginning 1:30 p.m. the first Saturday in June and wrapping up Monday morning with a final donation tally at the WHAS-TV studios. The money is raised primarily by volunteer fire departments, organizations and individuals.

Saturday night traditionally features a live variety show with national and local talent. The grassroots portion of the Crusade is on Sunday, when people from all walks of life visit the station to bring donations. Crusade charities are spotlighted the entire weekend.

Learn more about WHAS Crusade for Children online at <http://www.whascrusade.org/>.

KECC CHFS Cup Standings

There's a new Cabinet leader for the third reporting period in the Kentucky Employees Charitable Campaign. The Department for Disability Determination Services recorded the highest participation rate of any office in the Cabinet for this period, claiming the CHFS KECC Cup and the bragging rights that go with it.

DDS enthusiastically accepted CHFS KECC campaign chairman Mike Fields' challenge to pick up the pace in our giving and raised the bar with its generosity and teamwork.

In addition to having the highest participation rate for this reporting period, DDS has gone beyond individual participation to conduct a number of KECC fundraisers. More fundraising events are planned. CHFS employees in Frankfort are urged to take advantage of additional opportunities to give to KECC by supporting DDS and other Cabinet fund-raisers.

Cabinet's State Fair efforts a success

By Anya Armes Weber

The Cabinet encouraged thousands of 2005 Kentucky State Fairgoers to "Get Moving on the Path to Better Health."

Here is a brief glimpse at the CHFS State Fair display by the numbers:

- Almost 9,000 people received blood pressure screenings and counseling.
- More than 5,000 children, teens and adults tested their knowledge of nutrition, safety, smoking cessation and physical activity playing the "Mind Bender" trivia game.
- About 3,000 visitors to the CHFS exhibit voted for their favorite meals from a choice of two each for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Almost 7,000 people pledged to protecting children, adults and elders by signing the abuse prevention banner.
- About 300 staff volunteered to work at least one shift at the fair.

Special thanks to employees who coordinated and staffed exhibits at the fair.

Several staff visited the exhibit on "CHFS Family Day," and a couple of employees won prizes. Here are the winners.

- State Parks overnight getaway: Colby Wagoner, Nutrition Services Branch
- Gas card and T-shirts: Carrie Burgin, Department for Public Health, Division of Administration and Financial Management

CHFS Focus Health Tip of the Week: September is Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month

By Anne Parr, R.N.

This month is dedicated to heightening awareness of gynecological cancers and the importance of screening and early detection.



Gynecologic cancers originate in the female reproductive organs and about 82,500 women in the United States are



diagnosed with these cancers each year. All women are at some risk for developing a gynecologic cancer.

Women need to be aware of their bodies and, if something's not quite right, make an appointment with and talk to your health care provider about it.

Because there is no single test or screening procedure for all types of gynecologic cancer, women are urged to follow three key prevention strategies:

- Annual exams that include a Pap test along with self-examinations conducted regularly can result in the detection of certain types of gynecologic cancers in their early stages, when treatment is more likely to be successful and a complete cure is possible.
- Knowing your family history and talking to your health care provider can help you assess your risk so you can make informed decisions and schedule regular screenings.
- Know your body and don't ignore menstrual or basic health abnormalities and empower and educate yourself about gynecologic cancer signs, symptoms and screening methods.

For more information visit: <http://www.wcn.org/>.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber



Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

Most of us have recently completed our August interim evaluations. Getting feedback from supervisors or coworkers can help us improve our work performance. It's up to us to show an openness and appreciation toward those who respond with feedback. Human resources expert, author and consultant Susan Heathfield offers these tips for being receptive to feedback.

- Be grateful. Show the person giving feedback your appreciation. They'll feel encouraged and, believe it or not, you do want to encourage feedback.
- Ask questions to clarify. Focus on questions to make sure you understand the feedback. State in your own words what you think the other person meant.
- Control your defensiveness. Even managers and supervisors find providing feedback scary. They never know how the person receiving feedback is

going to react. If you find yourself becoming defensive or hostile, practice stress management techniques such as deep, controlled breathing.

- Wait to respond. If the feedback helped, cite specific examples. If you really disagree or are angry or upset and want to dissuade the other person of his or her opinion, wait until your emotions are under control to reopen the discussion.
- Just because a person gives you feedback, doesn't mean the feedback is right. People see your actions but interpret them through their own perception screens and life experiences. Determine the reliability of the feedback. If only one person believes it about you, it may be just him or her, not you.

Remember, Heathfield suggests, only you have the right and the ability to decide what to do with the feedback. If a good evaluation depends on you making a change, you'll want to focus efforts on that. If you are getting opinions from a coworker about your work, consider the source and the situation before acting on that feedback.